

NCBD NEWS

NCBD Sponsor Update

Commercial Sponsor Reports Now Available

NCBD 2003 Commercial Sponsor Reports were electronically released on September 15. The PDF files are available for download through the NCBD Web site (<http://ncbd.cahps.org/Home/index.asp>) until **October 15**. Please note that we are not issuing any commercial child reports this year because the number of submissions (4 plan samples) is too small to generate comparative benchmark results.

Medicaid Sponsor Reports Online October 15th

Medicaid reports will be available for download from October 15th – November 15th. Sponsors who submitted chronic conditions items will receive a special version of the report that incorporates those items.

SCHIP Sponsor Reports Online November 14th

SCHIP sponsor reports will be available from November 14th – December 15th. We encourage all sponsors to visit the Web site to download their reports during the month they are available.

2003 Chartbook is Released

Volume One of the NCBD 2003 Chartbook was released on **September 15th**. Volume One is similar in organization to the 2002 Chartbook, and includes cross-sector comparisons of Commercial, Medicaid, SCHIP, and Medicare Managed Care results for each of the composites and rating questions. The Chartbook can be accessed through the Web site at: <http://ncbd.cahps.org/pdf/NCBD2003Chartbook.pdf>. Volume Two, which will be released later in the fall, will include the same cross-

sector comparisons but at the question item level.

2003 Research Files

Research files for the 2003 NCBD data (for Commercial, Medicaid, and SCHIP sectors) will be available on December 15 for use by researchers that have received approval from the Executive Research Committee. An updated list of NCBD research projects is posted on the NCBD Web site at:

http://ncbd.cahps.org/pdf/2003_Summary_of_NCBD_Research_Projects.pdf

Guidelines and forms for submitting data access proposals are also available on the NCBD Web site.

Transition from CAHPS 2.0 to 3.0

This was a transition year for CAHPS as sponsors adopted the new 3.0 standard. While all commercial sponsors submitting to NCBD moved to 3.0 or 3.0H, a number of Medicaid sponsors stayed with 2.0 due to vendor contracts or commitments in place. This circumstance has presented a challenge in producing sponsor reports and for creating the various national benchmark results. Because our primary goal is to maximize the usefulness of CAHPS survey data by including as much data as possible, we combined survey data from the 2.0 and 3.0 Medicaid submissions, where applicable. This was not possible for several items that members of the CAHPS Consortium, as well as NCQA representatives, determined are not comparable. These items affect three of the five CAHPS composite measures: 1) Getting Needed Care, 2) Getting Care Quickly, and 3) Customer Service. As a result, Medicaid sponsors submitting 2.0 data will not receive benchmark comparisons for these composites in their 2003 sponsor reports.

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NCBD 2003 Data Submission

The following chart shows data submissions to the NCBD in 2003 compared to 2002. The total number of respondents is presented by population sector, with the number of health plan samples given in parentheses.

NCBD Year	Commercial	
	Adult	Child
2003	114,063 (216)	1,866 (4)
2002	94,546 (219)	5,600 (10)

Commercial: The number of commercial submissions remained fairly consistent between 2003 and 2002, following a fairly sharp decline in 2002 from the prior year. The majority of commercial submissions to NCBD come from OPM. Child submissions remain at a very low level, reflecting the limited use of this survey in the commercial sector.

NCBD Year	Medicaid	
	Adult	Child
2003	39,275 (112)	31,082 (69)
2002	48,109 (136)	60,534 (122)

Medicaid: About the same number of state agencies (18) submitted Medicaid data in 2003 as in the prior two years, but there were fewer overall plan samples and respondents since some of the largest states (CA and NY) did not complete CAHPS this year. Of the 18 submitting states, 16 submitted adult data and 12 submitted child data. The number of child surveys is down by almost half in 2003 compared to the prior two years. These fluctuations reflect a decision on the part of many states to implement CAHPS on an “every other year” basis, or to implement alternating versions of the survey from one year to the next,

e.g., alternating between the adult and child versions from year to year.

	SCHIP
	Child
2003	19,061 (49)
2002	18,910 (43)

SCHIP: 2002 was the first year that states submitted State Children Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) data to NCBD. In 2002, 3 states (CA, TX, and WA) submitted. This year, the number of states increased to 5 (AK, CA, OH, VG, and WI). But because Texas did not submit again, the total number of plans and surveys stayed about the same.

NCBD Year	Medicare
	Adult
2003	141,421 (295)
2002	153,172 (321)

Medicare: The number of plan samples and respondents for the Medicare Managed Care population continues to decline. Since NCBD receives the complete set of data files from CMS, this decline directly reflects the decreasing number of plans participating in Medicare Managed Care.

Data Quality Issues

The quality of data submissions to the NCBD continues to vary widely among sponsors and vendors. In general, data quality among Commercial sponsors is high, owing largely to the influence of NCQA submission standards and vendor training and certification requirements. In contrast, we experience greater

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problems and variability in the quality of data and file submissions by Medicaid sponsors and

their vendors. Examples of problems include:

- Use of a non-standard CAHPS survey
- Data submissions provided beyond the acceptable deadline
- Survey data files that do not conform to published specifications
- Information regarding plan type is missing or inconsistent
- Survey records that contain out of range values and blank records inappropriately identified as a “completed” survey

As a result, NCBD staff members exert considerable effort each year to correct the both Medicaid and Commercial data submissions.

To help address this situation and improve the quality of data submitted to NCBD by all sponsors, we are planning to take several steps to minimize problems in 2004. These steps will initially focus on the Medicaid sector and include the following:

- 1) We will provide a report this fall to Medicaid sponsors detailing their specific data quality problems, so they are aware of issues and have the information they need to communicate directly with their vendors.
- 2) We will make the 3.0 standard mandatory for all submissions in 2004, and ask sponsors to amend their vendor contracts accordingly.
- 3) We will institute a sponsor and vendor orientation and training process so that all sponsors and vendors are aware of the NCBD submission protocols.
- 4) We will move up the Medicaid data submission deadline by one month, to July 1 (the same date that applies to Commercial submissions), to give us more time to respond to data problems if they are present.

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Taking steps to improve the quality and timeliness of data submissions will serve the interests of everyone connected to the NCBD. We look forward to your cooperation in this effort.

New and Improved NCBD Web Site

Just a reminder to visit the NCBD Web site at <http://ncbd.cahps.org> to keep abreast of updates and new releases.